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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *Auguſt* the 9th, 1753.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

I WAS greatly ſurpriſed, that when in a late paper you were diſplaying your knowledge in diſeaſes, and in the ſeveral ſpecifics for their cure, you ſhould be ſo very forgetful as never to mention a malady, which at preſent is not only epidemical, but of the fouleſt and moſt inveterate kind. This malady is called by the learned the CACOETHES CARPENDI, and by the vulgar CRITICISM. It is not more true that every man is born in SIN, than that he is born in CRITICISM. For many years indeed the diſtemper was uncommon, and not dangerous in its conſequences; ſeldom attacking any but philoſophers and men of learning, who from a ſedentary

tary life and intenſe application to books, were more open to its influence than other men. In time, by the infection of dedications, it began to ſpread itſelf among the GREAT, and from them, like the gout or a more noble diſtemper, it deſcended to their inferiors, till at laſt it has infected all ranks and orders of men.

BUT as it is obſervable that an inhabitant of the fens in Lincolnſhire is moſt liable to an ague, a Yorkſhire man to horſe ſtealing, and a Suſſex man to ſmuggling; ſo is it alſo obſervable that the perſons moſt liable to the contagion of CRITICISM, are young maſters of arts, ſtudents in the temple, attorneys clerks, haberdathers prentices, and fine gentlemen.

As I had long ago looked upon this diſtemper to be more particularly Engliſh than any other, I determined, for the good of my country, whatever pains it might coſt me, to trace it to its firſt principles; but it was not till very lately that my labours were attended with any certain ſucceſs. I had diſcovered in general that the patient had an acidity of blood, which if not corrected in time, broke out into a kind of EVIL, which though no king's-evil, might poſſibly I thought be cured by touching: but it occurred to me that the touch of an oak-ſaplin might be much more efficacious than that of the ingenious Mr. CARTE'S SOMEBODY. A linnen-draper's prentice in the neighbourhood happening at that time to be labouring under a ſevere fit, I hinted this my opinion to his maſter, who immediately applied the touch; but I will not wrong my conſcience by boaſting of its effect, having learnt that the lad was ſeen ſoon after at a certain coffee-houſe in the Strand, all over CRITICISM.

UNTIRED by diſappointment, I continued my ſearches with redoubled diligence; and it is this day that I

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can felicitate myſelf, as well as thouſands of my countrymen, that they have not been in vain.

THE cauſe then of this loathſome diſtemper is moſt certainly WIND. This being pent in the bowels for ſome time, and the rules of good-breeding not permitting it, in public places, to take its natural courſe; it immediately flies up into the head, and after being whirled about for a while in that empty region, at length diſcharges itſelf with great violence upon the organ of ſpeech. This occaſions an involuntary motion in that member, which continues with great rapidity for a longer or a ſhorter time, according to the power or force of the original blaſt which ſet it in motion. This volubility, or rather vibration of tongue, is accompanied with certain unintelligible ſounds, which like the barkings of perſons bit by a mad dog, are the moſt fatal proofs of the malignity of the diſtemper.

THE late doctor Monro, who was long ago conſulted upon the caſe, gave it as his opinion, that it was a ſpecies of madneſs, known among the Greeks by the name of κακοθυμία and among the Romans by MALEVOLENTIA. It is ſaid of that great and humane man, that from his concern for theſe poor creatures, he intended if he had lived a little longer, to have propoſed a new building for their reception, contiguous to that in Moorfields: and as they are quite harmleſs things, would charitably have taken them under his own immediate care. The loſs of that eminent phyſician, were it from no other conſideration, cannot but be lamented as a public misfortune; his ſcheme being intended to prevent the contagion of CRITICISM from ſpreading ſo univerſally among his Majeſty's ſubjects. For there is one melancholy circumſtance attending this diſeaſe, namely, that it is of quicker

quicker and more certain infection than the plague: being communicated, like yawning, to a large circle of company in an inſtant of time: and (what is ſufficient confirmation of the cauſe) the congregated vapour which is emitted at ſuch times, is more diſagreeable and offenſive than if had taken its proper and natural courſe.

But the doctor's principal reaſon for conjecturing this diſtemper to be madneſs, was its being almoſt continually acted upon by external objects. A man in the hydrophobia will be in agonies at the ſight of water or any liquid; and it is very well known that perſons afflicted with a CRITICISM will be thrown into equal agonies at the ſight of a new book, pamphlet, or poem. But the greateſt and moſt convulſive of all agonies are found to proceed from the repreſentation of a new play. I have myſelf obſerved upon this occaſion a mob of poor wretches ſending forth ſuch diſmal groans, and ſuch piercing ſhrieks, as have quite moved me: after this they have ſtarted up on a ſudden, and with all the fury of madmen, have torn up the benches from under them, and put an entire ſtop to an entertainment, which to pay for a ſight of, they have many of them borrowed the money from their maſters tills.

That this has the appearance of madneſs I cannot deny; yet I have ſeen a turky-cock behave with equal fury at the appearance of a woman in a red petticoat; and I have always imputed it to the fillineſs of the bird, rather than to any diſorder in his brain.

But whether this be madneſs or not, the original cauſe is moſt infallibly WIND; and to have diſcovered the cauſe of any diſtemper, is to have taken the leading ſtep towards effecting its cure; which is indeed the ſole end and deſign of this letter.

Wind then being the undoubted cauſe of that univerſal diſeaſe, vulgarly known by the name of CRITI-

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CISM, the patient muſt enter into an immediate and regular courſe of CARMINATIVES. The herbs angelica, fennel, and camomile will be extremely proper for his tea; and the ſeeds of dill, cummin, anniſe, carroway, coriander or cardamum, ſhould never be out of his mouth. Theſe, by the conſent of all phyſicians, are the great diſpellers of WIND. But that is not all. From whence have they their name of CARMINATIVES? Not from this quality; here are no traces of ſuch an etymology; but they are happily poſſeſſed of another and more excellent virtue; and that in ſo eminent a degree as to take their name from it. This is the power of expelling all the pernicious effects of poetry, verſes, ſongs, CARMINA; all that farrago of trumpery, which is ſo ſtrangely jumbled together in the inteſtines of that miſerable invalid who labours under the weakneſs and diſorder of CRITICISM. For it is a great miſtake in the learned, that theſe medicines took their name of CARMINATIVES from the ancient jugglers in phyſic accompanying their operation with verſes and ſcraps of poetry, by way of incantation or charm: they certainly obtained this appellation from their wonderful power of expelling that particular ſpecies of WIND which is engendered in the CRITIC's bowels by reading of plays, poetry and other works of wit, too hard for his digeſtion.

THAT all perſons labouring under an habitual and obſtinate CRITICISM may be induced to enter into this courſe of CARMINATIVES, I can aſſure them with great certainty, that the operation of theſe medicines, notwithſtanding the prodigious diſcharge of crudities which they occaſion, is not attended with the leaſt ſickneſs to the patient himſelf; he has indeed the appearance of

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